

Fairy Tale



BIG BOOK OF FAIRY TALES

ILLUSTRATED

BY

GUSTAVE DORÉ
AND OTHER ARTISTS



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THE UGLY DUCKLING.

IN a sunny spot stood an old country-house, encircled by canals. Between the walk and the water's edge there grew huge burdock leaves, that had shot up to such a height that a little child might have stood upright under the tallest of them; and this spot was as wild as though it had been situated in the depths of a wood. In this snug retirement a duck was setting on her



"Do you fancy this is the whole world?" cried the mother. "Why, it reaches far away beyond the other side of the garden, down to the parson's field; though I never went to such a distance as that!" But are you all there?" continued she, rising. "No, faith! you are not; for there still lies the largest egg. I wonder how long this business is to last—I really begin to grow quite tired of it!" And she sat down once more.

"Well, how are you getting on?" inquired an old duck, who came to pay her a visit.

"This egg takes a deal of hatching," answered the sitting duck, "it won't break; but just look at the others, are they not the prettiest ducklings ever seen? They are the image of their father, who, by-the-bye, does not trouble himself to come and see me."

"Let me look at the egg that won't break," quoth the old

when we go down to the water; for in he shall go, though I push him in myself."

On the following morning the weather was most delightful, and the sun was shining brightly on the green burdock leaves. The mother duck took her young brood down to the canal. Splash into the water she went. "Quack! quack!" cried she, and forthwith one duckling after another jumped in. The water closed over their heads for a moment; but they soon rose to the surface again, and swam about so nicely, just as if their legs

paddled them about of their own accord; and they had all taken to the water; even the ugly, gray-coated youngster swam about with the rest.





close to me, that nobody may tread upon you; and, above all, beware of the cat."

They now reached the farm-yard, where there was a great hubbub. Two families were fighting for an eel's head, which, in the end, was carried off by the cat.

"See, children, that's the way with the world!" remarked the mother of the ducklings, licking her beak, for she would have been very glad to have had the eel's head for herself. "Now, move on!" said she, "and mind you cackle properly, and bow your head before that old duck yonder; she is the noblest born of them all, and is of Spanish descent, and that's why she is





The ducklings did as they were bid; but the other ducks, after looking at them, only said aloud: "Now look! there comes another set, as if we were not numerous enough already. And bless me! what a queer-looking chap one of the ducklings is to be sure—we can't put up with him!" And one of the throng darted forward, and bit him in the neck.

"Leave him alone," said the mother, "he did no harm to any one."

"No; but he is too big and uncouth," said the biting duck. "and therefore he wants a thrashing."

"Mamma has a sweet little family," said the old duck, with the red rag about her leg; "they are all pretty except one, who is rather ill-favored. I wish mamma could polish him a bit."

"I'm afraid that will be impossible, your grace," said the mother of the ducklings. "It's true, he is not pretty, but he has a very good disposition, and swims as well, or perhaps better than all the others put together. However, he may grow prettier, and perhaps become smaller; he remained too long in

Nor did matters mend the next day, or the following ones, but rather grew worse and worse. The poor Duckling was hunted down by everybody. Even his sisters were so unkind to him, that they were continually saying, "I wish the cat would run away with you, you ugly creature!" while his mother added, "I wish you had never been born!" And the ducks pecked at him, the



hens struck him, and the girl who fed the poultry used to kick him.

So he ran away, and flew over the palings. The little birds in the bushes were startled, and took wing. "That is because I am so ugly," thought the Duckling, as he closed his eyes in despair, but presently he roused up again, and ran on further till he came to a large marsh inhabited by wild ducks. Here he spent the whole night—and tired and sorrowful enough he was.

On the following morning, when the wild ducks rose and saw